



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

*August 20, 2009*

## **HIS EMINENCE METROPOLITAN ALEXIOS` MESSAGE TO COLLEGE STUDENTS**

My dear spiritual children,

“Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you.” (John 20:21)

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. As we look forward to the beginning of a new Ecclesiastical and academic year, I pray that our Lord will richly bless you with His peace, joy and love as you begin the new academic year at your colleges and universities.

As we all know, the college years are a critical time for you as you face many challenges. When you were growing up, your family and parish community provided a kind of temporary scaffold or support around you that protected you as you grew, much like that of the scaffolds built around structures during building or repair to provide a temporary stability.

Now as a young adult, you must make your own choices about the culture around you, the values and attitudes that are being promoted through movies, television, technology and the Internet, and even in your classes. Much of this content may be incompatible with our Orthodox Christian values and beliefs.

Some say that it is the times, that you are facing temptations and difficulties that your parents never faced. Yet if you are honest

with yourselves you will realize that your parents and their parents encountered the same kind of problems and temptations, and tomorrow your children will face the same. If you become confused and feel as if you have lost your way, it is because you allow the world and its values to define your lives, rather than our Orthodox Christian faith.

During this time you may discover the need for living your lives on terms other than the destructive values and culture you may find on campus. In OCF or Orthodox Christian Fellowship you will find a place of support, friendship and spiritual identity, other than the prevailing values and culture you see around you on campus.

After all, education is not just acquiring information it is also formation - of a character and identity distinguished by wisdom and virtue and discernment. The time at college will shape your future in ways that you may not now be able to understand or imagine. It can be a time for growth and development so that you leave college with a faith and a character that will sustain you throughout any trial or difficulty and enable you to live a joyous and fulfilled life. Or you can waste these precious years on so-called "pleasure" and "partying" and spend the rest of your lives trying to recover from the spiritual destruction and the consequences of such behavior.

So the OCF is very important to me personally, as well as a vital part of my own ministry to the Faithful, to guide and encourage you at a critical (and sometimes perilous) time of your lives. Truly you are trying to learn to live in world that can be dangerous and treacherous, and one that is becoming increasingly intolerant and hostile to the Christian faith. Thanks be to God, there are now many chapters of OCF in our Metropolis of Atlanta, and across the country. But just as importantly there are dedicated priests and parish communities who will welcome you with open arms and assist you in any way on your path in life.

With sincere prayers and best wishes for the future and

entreating our Lord's blessing upon you and your families, I remain

Paternaly yours,

+ALEXIOS  
Metropolitan of Atlanta